

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BUENOS 06264 171602Z

65

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

IO-10 SIL-01 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 /084 W

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R 171500Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2760

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 6264

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AR, PINT, PGOV

SUBJECT: INITIAL REACTIONS TO LUDER'S CABINET CHANGES

REF: BA 6203

1. SUMMARY. FIRST REACTIONS TO INTERIM PRESIDENT LUDER'S SEPTEMBER 15 CABINET SHAKEUP HAVE BEEN HIGHLY FAVORABLE. OUSTER OF DAMASCO AND PRESIDENTIAL PRIVATE SECRETARY JULIO GONZALEZ REMOVES REMAINING FIGURE WHO MOST OBVIOUSLY EXERCISED POLITICAL POWER THROUGH PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITH MRS. PERON AND SHIFTS AUTHORITY TO MORE POLITICALLY REPRESENTATIVE FIGURES. FACT THAT LUDER WOULD TAKE SUCH DECISIVE ACTION ON FIRST WORKING DAY IN OFFICE SEEN BY MOST OBSERVERS AS EVIDENCE HE EITHER INTENDS TO STAY ON LONG BEYOND 45-DAY VACATION PERIOD OR AT LEAST TO SO RESTRUCTURE GOVERNMENT SO AS TO PLACE MRS. PERON IN FIGUREHEAD ROLE IF SHE SHOULD RETURN. IT SEEMS EQUALLY CLEAR TO POLITICIANS WE HAVE CONTACTED THAT MRS. PERON MUST HAVE ACCEPTED ONE OR BOTH OF THESE POSSIBILITIES BEFORE DEPARTING FOR HER VACATION FURTHER CABINET CHANGES ARE EXPECTED TO BE ANNOUNCED SHORTLY.

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PAGE 02 BUENOS 06264 171602Z

END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY POLITICAL SOURCES CONTACTED THUS FAR ARE UNANIMOUS IN PRAISING LUDER'S CABINET SHAKEUP. WITH DAMSCO AND PRESIDENTIAL PRIVATE SECRETARY JULIO GONZALEZ, WHOSE POWER WAS DERIVED FROM PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MRS. PERON, NOW DEPARTED, MOST OBSERVERS EXPECT NEW INTERIOR MINISTER ROBLEDO TO MOVE QUICKLY TO ESTABLISH OPEN CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION WITH OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES. ROBLEDO, WHO ENJOYS RESPECT AND CONFIDENCE OF OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS AND MILITARY HIERARCHY, APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN THE IDEAL CANDIDATE TO UNDERTAKE TASK OF BRINGING SOME POLITICAL UNITY TO BADLY FRACTURED ARGENTINE POLITY.

3. WITH RESPECT TO MRS. PERON'S ROLE IN EVENTS, ONE SENIOR RADICAL PARTY OFFICIAL WITH GOOD TIES TO LUDER TOLD EMBOFF THAT LUDER ENTERED OFFICE SATURDAY INTENDING TO CHANGE CABINET BUT NOT JUST YET. TIMING OF ANNOUNCEMENT, WHICH CAUGHT EVEN ROBLEDO BY SURPRISE, WAS PRECIPITATED BY STORMY MEETING BETWEEN LUDER AND DAMASCO LATE AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 15. DAMSCO, APPARENTLY FEELING HE HAD SOME ASSURANCES FROM MRS. PERON THAT HE WOULD STAY ON, CHALLENGED LUDER AND WITHIN MINUTES WAS NO LONGER IN THE CABINET. SAME SOURCE, A FREJULI SENATOR, AND WELL-INFORMED POLITICAL COLUMNIST HERIBERTO KAHN OF LA OPINION ALL AGREE THAT LUDER IS MOVING TO RESTRUCTURE GOVERNMENT MORE TO HIS OWN LIKING, EITHER BECAUSE HE INTENDS TO STAY ON AS PRESIDENT, OR TO MANIPULATE SITUATION SO THAT IF MRS. PERON RETURNS TO OFFICE SHE WILL BE REFT OF REAL POLITICAL POWER. SAME SOURCES AND OTHER POLITICIANS EMBASSY CONTACTED TODAY BELIEVE THAT MRS. PERON, PRIOR TO TURNING POWER OVER TO LUDER SEPTEMBER 13, UNDERSTOOD THAT IN TAKING VACATION SHE WAS SERIOUSLY ERODING HER OWN AUTHORITY.

4. BOTH POLITICAL AND LABOR SOURCES HAVE TOLD EMBOFFS THAT LORENZO MIGUEL, HEAD OF THE 62 ORGANIZATIONS WHO STANDS TO LOSE MOST POLITICALLY IN LATEST TURN OF EVENTS, IS COMING UNDER INCREASING PRESSURE. POLITICAL SOURCES SAY MIGUEL'S POSITION HAS BECOME UNTENABLE AND HIS OUSTER IS EXPECTED AT ANY TIME. LABOR SOURCES ARE MORE CAUTIOUS IN ASSESSING MIGUEL'S PROSPECTS, THOUGH, CGT EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER TOLD LABAT THAT CASILDO HERRERAS AND OTHER CGT LEADERS WERE MOVING TO CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BUENOS 06264 171602Z

RETURN CGT TO RIGHTFUL LEADERSHIP ROLE IN LABOR MOVEMENT. ANY MOVE THAT GAVE PRIMACY TO CGT WOULD, OF COURSE, UNDERMINE MIGUEL'S POSITION AND BY EXTENSION, MRS. PERON'S.

5. POLITICAL OBSERVERS NOW EXPECT LUDER TO ANNOUNCE FURTHER CABINET CHANGES. THREE MINISTERS CONSIDERED MOST LIKELY TO BE DROPPED FROM CABINET IN NEAR FUTURE ARE EDUCATION MINISTER ARRIGHI, LABOR MINISTER RUCKAUF AND SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER

EMERY.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, GOVERNMENT REFORM, PERSONNEL MOVEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 SEP 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BUENOS06264
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750322-0701
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750941/aaaabjxy.tel
Line Count: 117
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BUENOS AIRES 6203
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 SEP 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <11 DEC 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INITIAL REACTIONS TO LUDER'S CABINET CHANGES
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, AR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006